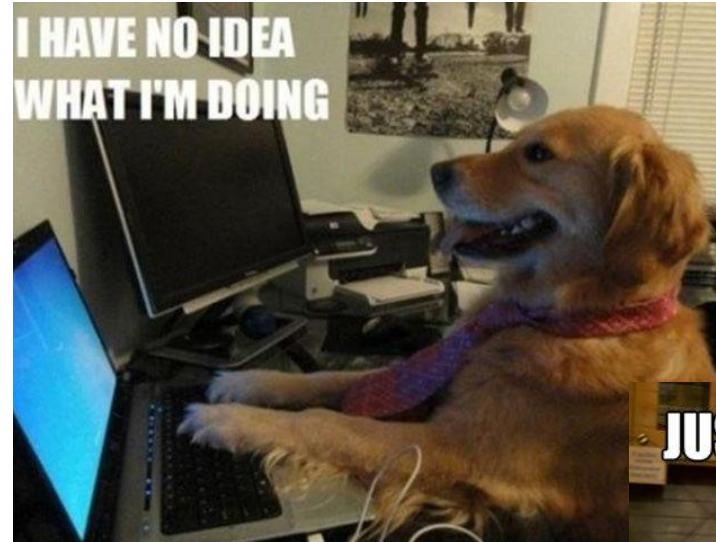


Stuff I've Learned:

From



To



Charter School Training

January 30, 2019

[Eric Grunden](#)

Research Triangle High School

Lessons learned from Early Years of Charter School Operation

Research Triangle High School

- STEM focused
- Located in the heart of the Research Triangle Park
- Opened August 2012 for 147 9th graders (currently 549 9th -12th graders)
- Fast track; charter approved March 2012 for August 2012 start
- 1:1 computing environment, BYOD
- Uses a homebrew version of the [Summit Learning](#) model of “personalized learning”

Agenda for today:

1. Hiring
2. Special Populations
3. Achieving long and short term goals
4. Process or something.



Hiring

1. What?

- GOOD Bookkeeper/accountant – “financial accountability” is all the rage
- **Certified** EC teacher(s)
- School leader with vision
- Data Manager – can hack Powerschool
- Managing Director? Optional, but makes life easier!
- Hiring Policies – HR expert
 - Leave/personal time off
 - Dismissal/due process – this will involve the board
 - Not just how does it happen but why/under what conditions?
 - Procedures for communication
 - Salary – scales, bonuses, NBPTS? (teacher attraction/retention)
 - ADA/FMLA

2. Who

- The disaffected! (folks from district schools who want out)

3. When

- Data Manager ASAP – start building relationships with schools/counties
- EC ASAP (though not much you can do before enrollment)

Hiring (continued)

4. How?

- Networking
- Social media
- Older methods not effective, though YMMV
- [Interview models](#)*

5. Why (are you hiring, and how can you keep your people)?

- Cohesive staff
- Willing to take risks, challenge status quo, innovate
- Teachers like to be respected
 - Meaningful/interesting/unique evaluations
 - Reflect on what you are doing
 - Teach them new things (effective staff development that is tailored to your school)
 - Watch for burnout
 - Ownership of the institution

*While that might be fun, we mean these are models for the interview process, not that you should go out and interview models.



Special Populations

Thank you for creating a school that focuses on children with special needs!

1. Remember who you are serving!
 1. State/Federal agencies
 2. Students
 3. Parents
 4. Teachers
2. Understanding the special needs parent
 - Respecting needs/wants
 - Establishing boundaries
 - Parent/school
 - IEP/504
 - Evaluating progress effectively – develop models you can sustain
3. Make friends with
 1. DPI EC specialists! (Or find your own)
 2. LEA EC specialists (see #5 below)

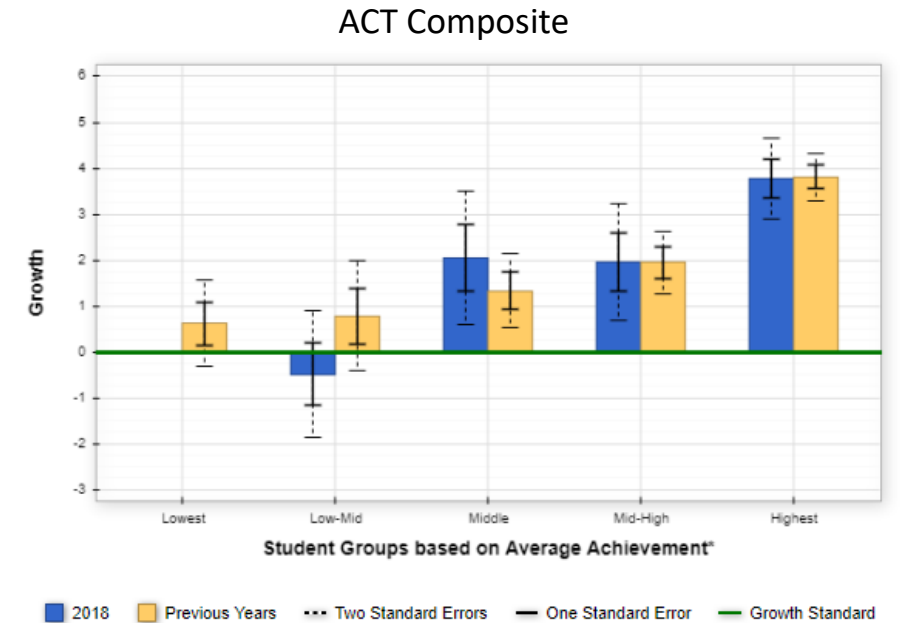
4. Gather your stable of contractors
 - Psychologists
 - Therapists (O, B, etc.)
5. Observe the 90 day rule
 - Or face Compensatory Services!
6. Get ready to become Indiana Jones
 - Find/correct records
7. Evaluate students and program regularly.
 - Refer to goals of plan, not grades
 - Effectively partition responsibility
 - Consider budget and
8. Be prepared for audits
 - Part of your annual financial audit
 - Monitoring by DPI
9. Make it rain!
 - Get your grants (IDEA part VI)
 - Budget back to the future – you are always a year behind your special ed funding



Ahhhh...the DEC 5!

Meeting Short/Long Term Goals

1. Maintain the vision
 - Memorize the mission statement
 - Apply it to everything you do
 - Don't do good things
2. Set targets for achievement
 - Not only students, but organization
 - Must be measurable
 - Aim high!
 - Develop sensible metrics and remember who you are
3. Ask why you are doing things at the school level
 - Are they helping improve the quality of education?
 - Are they correcting something that is preventing safe/effective operation?
 - Don't make policy without a good reason. Also, don't always enforce the rules.
4. Who is originating goals? Who is evaluating goals?
 - School leadership or board?
 - Board function models ([The High Bar](#), [Carver Governance model](#))
5. Once you're successful, what will you do?
 - Being a great school isn't the end of the line – propagate!



Planning and Operations (If opening in August of year X+1)

1. By Christmas X, have
 - CSO identified – will lead hiring
 - Facility identified – permitting, construction. You need a C.O. to get your first allotment.
2. Hiring – led by CSO, supported/approved by board
 - New hires recruit – show off your faculty
 - Summer schedules/training – have people ready to go
3. Advertising for population/marketing
 - Use staff
 - Use building/imagination to sell
4. Post-enrollment
 - Coordinating new parents
 - Exploiting new relationships
5. Cash poor, idea rich
 - No funding until C.O. arrives; even then a few weeks late
 - Budget unknown until November or later

Planning and Operations

6. Take easy route early

- Find out what others use and go with that (janitors, copiers, etc). Save comparison shopping for year 2.
- Emphasize education – how is what we are trying to do going to help teachers teach and students learn?
- Cash flow more important than budget – keep the lights on
 - Innovative solutions to cash flow problems
- Keep budget flexible in year one (have enough slush for timely arrangements)

7. Plan vacations for admin staff.

- Not during YET (last week of fiscal year).
- Not GIVING vacations, just trying to convince people to take some time.

8. Mascot/Color Scheme!

What to think about as a board

1. Ideal composition?
 - Number?
 - Diversity? (not just demographic but career/background)
2. How to preserve institutional memory
 - Classes
 - Phased expansion
3. Onboarding process
4. Board-Building
 - Retreats
 - Committee work
 - Public appearances
 - Support of school staff/administration
5. Formalizing operational principles and relationship with school administration
6. How to evaluate the school leader?
7. How to remain accountable and responsive to school clients